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July 29, 2011

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte Notice in WC Dockets 11-42, 03-109 and CC Docket 96-45

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On July 21, 2011 Dr. George Korn, Communications Director for Rainbow Push Coalition, and I with Angela Kronenberg, staff advisor for Commissioner Clyburn, FCC Chair of the Universal Service Joint Board, Commissioner McDowell and his Legal advisor Erin McGrath, and Commissioner Michael Copps and his legal advisor Margaret McCarthy regarding the above-referenced proceedings.

In particular, we discussed the importance of the Lifeline cellphone program and the positive impact of the Lifeline cellphone program on providing low income individuals help in finding and maintaining employment in this extremely difficult economic environment, and the usefulness of mobile cellphones in obtaining timely emergency services. Dr. Korn elaborated on his first hand experiences witnessing the direct immediate benefits of Lifeline.

Also discussed was the beneficial aspect of the Low Income program in that the Lifeline and Link-Up subsidies are passed through 100% to low income Americans versus the High Cost Fund where the subsidies go to corporations, not individuals needing basic telecommunication services. Dr. Korn discussed the benefits of niche providers such as Nexus Communications Inc., who concentrate their focused outreach efforts on Lifeline qualified constituents versus the large incumbent service providers who have traditionally shied away from servicing the low income population due to the increased customer service related costs of bringing Lifeline and Link-Up directly to the communities who need it the most. Dr. Korn shared the enclosed photograph, which demonstrates the very personal nature of Nexus' outreach efforts.

Dr. Korn also discussed the vitally important benefits of Link-Up subsidies and how Link-Up allows the smaller carriers, such as Nexus, the ability to compete with much larger Lifeline providers who can cross-subsidize the up-front costs of delivering Lifeline to where it is needed most desperately. Dr. Korn's belief that eliminating the "free" aspect of the program or placing undue restrictions on subscribers to pay upfront or monthly out-of-pocket fees to participate in the program runs contra to the intent of the program.

Dr. Korn also discussed that restricting, limiting or eliminating access to Link-Up subsidies to Lifeline providers that predominately service low income Americans *because* those companies focus on providing services primarily to low income families would be considered unfair, inequitable and contrary to the spirit and intent of the program. Dr. Korn related that low income American families in the past have historically had great difficulty in obtaining Lifeline and Link-Up services due to a lack of competition in the marketplace.

Dr. Korn discussed the importance of maintaining the status quo of allowing Lifeline applicants to enroll for Lifeline by continuing to self-certify under penalty of perjury. He stated that imposing additional restrictions, such as requiring "proof of poverty" such as copies of foodstamp letters, will prevent and discourage qualified low-income households from enrolling in Lifeline. Dr. Korn related that his experience has shown that documentation of program-based eligibility is not readily available to many low income households that may relocate often and lack the luxury of organized retention of important papers and documents issued over time. Low income Americans also lack access to fax machines, copiers, and scanners needed to transmit documentation to service providers seeking to enroll Lifeline and Link-Up subscribers. Dr. Korn believes that requiring documentation in advance of providing needed Lifeline and Link-Up services is analogous to the current battle over voter ID laws which tend to disenfranchise voters rather than encourage voter registration.

Dr. Korn expressed opposition to capping the Low Income fund when presently, only 32% of those eligible for the program's services are receiving them. Dr. Korn explained that placing a cap on the Lifeline and Link-Up program at current levels would only serve to exclude the 68% of eligible low income Americans who have yet to experience the benefits of the Lifeline and Link-Up program.

Dr. Korn strongly supports Broadband deployment but not at the expense of eliminating or curtailing the free cellphone program that provides easily access to basic telecommunication service for low income families. Dr. Korn noted that other low income advocates like AARP, National Consumer Law Center, Rainbow Push and Keep USF Fair all seem to support a Low Income program that is economically sustainable, while still able to deliver basic telecommunication services to those who need those services the most.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's rules, this letter is being filed electronically. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

/s/ Deborah Taylor Tate

Deborah Taylor Tate

